



News for Immediate Release

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DWR Schedules First Snow Survey of 2009-2010 Season

SACRAMENTO - The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) will conduct its first snow survey of the new winter season at 11 a.m., Wednesday, December 30, 2009.

Survey Location and Results

Phillips Station at Highway 50 and Sierra at Tahoe Road, about 90 miles east of Sacramento, is the manual survey location. Reporters and photographers should take snowshoes or cross-country skis and park vehicles along Highway 50.

Snow depth and water content figures should be available by noon. The survey will be the first of five monthly measurements that help water supply planners estimate the amount of spring snowmelt runoff into reservoirs.

Water Supply Threats

California's snowpack water content is particularly significant this year because the state has endured three years of drought and reservoirs are low. Because less-than-normal water supply conditions exist, DWR's initial State Water Project (SWP) allocation for 2010 was placed at only 5 percent of water contractors' requested amounts.

Besides dry conditions, regulatory restrictions to protect native fish species are severely impacting SWP deliveries.

Regardless of snowpack conditions, it is clear water deliveries through the

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta will remain in jeopardy. The state is working toward a comprehensive solution that must include additional water storage and alternative conveyance. These measures would increase water supply reliability for farms and businesses, and benefit fisheries. A new conveyance would allow water deliveries, while avoiding pumping hazards to the most sensitive fish species.

About Snow Surveying

Snow-water content is important in determining the coming year's water supply. The measurements help hydrologists prepare water supply forecasts as well as provide other entities, such as hydroelectric power companies and the recreation industry, with much needed data.

Snow monitoring is coordinated by DWR as part of the multi-agency California Cooperative Snow Surveys Program. Surveyors from more than 50 agencies and utilities visit hundreds of snow measurement courses each month to gauge the amount of water in the snowpack.

In addition to this single manually measured site, reporters can find the latest real-time estimations of statewide water content posted on the Internet at http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/snowsurvey_sno/DLYSWEQ.

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The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.

Contact the [DWR Public Affairs Office](#) for more information about DWR's water activities.